## TANA BUAGAI IN JARRAMO

Prof. S. Narayan 2011

## Introduction

Tana Bhagats are one of the tribes of Jharkhand. It is said that originally They belong to Oraon tribal group. Tana Bhagats have embraced the Kurukh Dharm or the (real or original) of the Kurukhs as they call to and are the followers of the movement called the Tana Bhagat movement. They are the only tribal groups who are follower of the Mohandas Karmchand Gandhi i.e. Mahatma Gandhi, Father of the nation. 'Tana' means to draw thing or to pull. The TanaBhagats resent the inferiority of their position and wish to improve it. They believe that only way to improve their condition is to practice Gandhi in their life and to follow Gandhian way of life as well as to obey God and to have right relationship with Him. The correct ritual to ensure it is to give up all impure things and to purify oneself in order to worship God. Therefore, they banned all food and ceremonies which made them impure and condemned witchcraft, sorcery etc. As a result, Dharmes (God) would see that people are obeying His orders and would pull everything which harms human beings.

Tana Bhagats are generally found in Ranchi, Gumla, Lohardaga, Chatra, Palamu districts of Jharkhand state. Their total population, as reported by Ganga Tana Bhagat former MLA, is approximately 45,000. Their population is dwindling.

A network of spurs and hills covered with thick jungles are their principal abodes. Shut in between these hills and spurs lie their small hemlets almost inaccessible to an outsider. Such a country is specially suited to these jealously exclusive people and it has enabled them to maintain their isolation long after the reserve of other tribes has broken down.

In The traditional system a village community comprised a group of families, related as agnates and the administration was carried on by the village council. For social and political purposes a group of allied villages confederated together into groups known as Parhas or Pirs. Twelve to Thirty villages formed a Parha. Each Parha had its own Parha chief and Parha council. Representatives from the village council were members of the Parha council, to whom the chief was responsible. Each Parha had within its own territory - a well established form of Government through the lineage and the village, which enabled it to manage its own affairs independently. Each village is economically sufficient, it produce its own food, its playground and forest, its own village artisans, potters, weavers, blacksmiths and herdsmen. Each Parha provided for its own needs and there was a little trade or economic dependence between the Parhas. As time went on continued external threats not only forced the Parhas

to submit to the authority of the tribal chief, but also to form a larger league with the neighboring major tribes. Chotanagpur was politically united under a chief. One of the Parha chief was chosen as leader, and acquired the position of the Raja of Chotanagpur. Tradition as well as the records of the Raja family of Chotanagpur give the detail of the election of the first Raja of Chotanagpur by the assembled Mundas and Oraons who unanimously elected Phani Mukut Rai, Then chief of Khukra to be their tribal chief. Sarat Chandra Roy and Eliot think that this event took place five centuries later, after emperor Samudra Gupta of Magadh marched through the country in his southern expedition. At least we know Phani Mukut Rai was chosen as the tribal chief was given the title of the Maharaja of Jharkhand.

It was during 18 <sup>Th</sup> century agrarian trouble that their faith in the old tribal system was completely shaken. The Oraon saw that their old Gods and spirits failed to bring any relief and to protect them against their manifold troubles . There was a strong desire for delivery from oppressive Zamindars and money lenders as well as the new land laws etc. Consequently, a new religious movements of the old Bhagat pattern was started by the Oraons who called its KURUKH DHARM or the religion of the Kurukhs . The leaders of the new faith gave assurance to their followers that through worship

to DHARMESH, the only God, They would be able to raise their present degraded position to higher level as occupied by their fellow tribesmen who became Hindus or Christian converts and thus secured protection of missionaries which enabled them to improve their economic condition considerably. The religious movement was first started in april 1914 by a young man called Jatra Bhagat of the village Chipri Nawatoly of Bishunpur thana. Jatra Bhagat, when he started this movement was undergoing Matis (witchcraft) training. It is believed that one night while he was returning home after his lessons, Dharmes, the supreme God of Oraons appeared before him and told him to give up his Matiao(ghost finding and exoricison) and his belief in the blood thirsty sprits and other deities which called for animal sacrifices. God told him to stop all animal sacrifices and to give up animal food and liquor and to give up plough in their land which meant cruelty to cows and oxen, but failed to save the people from famine and poverty. They lost faith in the land on which they where entirely dependent for their livelihood. He told the people that God does not want them to work as coolies and labourers under the zamindars or to men belonging to other castes and nontribals. He proclaimed that he had been ordered by God to lead his people and to teach them to worship Dharmes and through worshiping Dharmes they will achieve their desired goal. Thus Jatra

Bhagat gave expression to the ideas which have long been fermenting in minds of the people and who where struggling to give shape to a definite tribal cult, This idea , however , was not new to the tribals of Jharkhand. The seed of freedom movement among tribals was germinated by Birsa Munda who is considered as founder of Tribal political cult, Jatra Bhagat and other prophets later gave a definite shape to this cult which exists till date.

Jatra Tana Bhagat spread like a fire in the jungle throughout the Oroan country. People refused to work for Zamindars and other nontribals. Jatra Tana Bhagat was put behind the bar but this movement went on many local leaders took leadership in different parts of the tribal land.

Tana Bhagats believed that they can commune with God if they lived a life of ceremonial purity. Tana Bhagat gave up all kind of drinks ,meat etc. They do not take food cooked by any one except those who belong to their own faith They do not dance in Akharas, do not participate in Jatras. They do not wear coloured cloth or any kind of jwellery nor decorate their bodies with tattoo marks. During Ramgarh congress of the Indian national congress party Gandhi Jee (Mohan Das Karamchand Gandhi )spent three days with Tana Bhagats. His three days with them has such a deep

impact that even today they are following the Gandhian way of life and are practicing nonviolence in true spirit. They are living the life of Gandhi. They are living Gandhi of today.

The first and the most important problem of the Tana Bgahat is land. Since they totally depend on land so it has become a burning problem for them. The Tana Bhagats whose land were auctioned during British rule for their participation in freedom movement of the country wants to get back their land. In Bero Block only in last month their land were returned to them. During my field visit I requested each BDO/CO of Gumla, Lohardaga, Chatra, Ranchi districts to return the auctioned land of Tana Bhagats to them. They protest before the District Magistrate through nonviolence method.

It has been found during field visit that the NGO working among them for their development are exploiting them. The NGO get money for the development of Tana Bhagat which they are using in their own development. The data in hand suggest that the NGO are hand and globe for violent practices in Jharkhand.

The data in hand suggest that a special package be drafted and implemented for their development.

They are the only tribal group who not only believe in Gandhian philosophy but are leading Gandhian way of life. The naxalism or the Maoism is not at all prevalent in the villages and the region in which they are living. They are ready to render their services for the development of Gandhian philosophy. They are of the opinion that if they are sent to other villages and regions where naxalism or Maoism is present they would be minimizing such violent activities.

During noncooperation movement one of the freedom movement led by Mohan Das Karamchand Gandhijee Tana Bhagats stop payment of rents to their Zamindars and gave up ploughing in their field. Local police, Zamindars and money lenders reported it to the British officers. The authorities thus prohibited their gatherings and were sent to jail.

In 1921 when civil disobedience movement was stared by Mahatma Gandhi throughout the country, the Tana Bhagat first joined the freedom movement, under the leadership of Sidu Bhagat of Kuru thana Tana Bhagat believed that Jatra Bhagat was reincarnated in Gandhijee. Thus the Tana Bhagat movement which started as an economic and religious movement now took the shape of political movement by identifying itself with the Indian freedom movement.

In 1930 when the first no-rent campaign was started in Bardoli the Tana Bhagats were influenced by this and they stopped paying rent to the Government. There was no Congress Organization among them nor any Congress worker had informed them to do so. When they saw that Sardar Patel has started no-rent campaign at the Bardoli, they immediately stopped paying rent. The result was that their land was auctioned and today there are many landless Tana Bhagats who live as share cropper or labourers. Inspite of these they are blind follower of Gandhijee. Today Tana Bhagats are not only Oraon but they comprise three tribes i.e. Oraon, Munda and Kharia, of these Oraon are in majority.

The Tana Bhagats are agriculturists, but the land resources of Tana Bhagats are extremely limited. The disparity in the amount of land held by individual families due to the inequalities in the number of male siblings in the family and also because of auction of their land by the Govt. for not paying rent during non-cooperation movement. Failure to restore these land has caused widespread discontent and disappointment.

There is a growing pressure of population on the available land which makes it difficult for them to grow enough food even for subsistence.

Nontribal in tribal territory seek every opportunity to buy land from the tribesmen. The most

important problem of the Tana Bhagat is that of land. Reduction of rights over Gair Mazarua land and grazing land is also causing discontent particularly among those who have no land or very little land. All such village land has now been taken over by the Revenue department. In the traditional system, such land which comprised village common was meant for public use. Villagers fail to understand why they should not be allowed to use their own village land. Then They say, they are not allowed to clear new lands for cultivation in the forest tract because all the forest areas have been reserved by the forest department. Their another problem is the restriction put on their right to use forest products. Forest plays a very important part in the life of the tribal people. They depend very much for their subsistence on jungle produce i.e. roots, fruits, leaves, yams. These are the only food available to them during scarcity. Forests are their main source of wood for domestic purpose. The plant, roots, fruits and herbs are used as medicine or for making oil. The barks of the trees and creepers are used for making ropes. Leaves are used for making plates and rain caps, it is the grazing ground for their cattle as well the very idea that forest is denied to them gives them a great emotional shock.

Tana Bhagats wants to educate their children.

Tana Bhagat never send their children to missionary

Gandhijee. Special school for them need to be opened. school as they consider it against the ideology of

of infant mortality. The health of Tana Bhagat appears to be deterioriating. The main cause for ill health is poverty. There is highrate

positive action is required in this direction. Ranchi District Tana Bhagat Raiyats Agricultural land step taken by the state Government was to pass the 2011 land have not been restored to them. Some Restoration Act. This Act provided for the restoration rent between 1921 and 1942. But unfortunately even in Tana Bhagat their lands which were sold for arrears of Immediately after independence the first

for the holistic development of Tana Bhagats. Some specific programmes need to be drafted